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The Bishop of *BRISTOL's*

Fast-SERMON

Preach'd before the

House of LORDS,

On DECEMBER 16, 1720.

(Price Four-Pence.)

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

Lords Spiritual and Temporal

Die Mercurij, 21st. Decembris, 1720.

ORdered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament Assembled, That the Thanks of this House be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Bristol*, for the Excellent Sermon by him preached before this House on *Friday* last, in the *Abby-Church*, *Westminster*; and he is hereby desir'd to cause the same to be forthwith Printed and Published.

Wm Cowper,
Cler' Parliamentor'.

LONDON:
Printed for TIMOTHY CHILDS, at the White-Hart in St. Paul's Church-Yard. MDCCXX.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

Lords Spiritual and Temporal

IN

PARLIAMENT Aſſembled,

AT THE

Collegiate Church

OF

St. PETER'S *Weſtminſter*,

On *Friday*, *December* the 16th, 1720.

Being the Day appointed by His MAJESTY for a General Faſt and Humiliation for obtaining the Pardon of our Sins, and averting God's heavy Judgments; and particularly for beſeeching God to preſerve us from the PLAGUE, with which ſeveral other Countries are at this Time Viſited.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
HUGH Lord Biſhop of BRISTOL.

LONDON:
Printed for TIMOTHY CHILDE, at the *White-Hart* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. MDCCXX.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

Lords Spiritual and Temporal

IN

PARLIAMENT Assembled,

AT THE

Collegiate Church

OF

St. PETER's Westminster,

On Friday, December the 6th 1700.

Being the Day appointed by His Majesty's Royal Proclamation for a General Fast and Humiliation, for imploring the Pardon of our Sins, and averting God's heavy Judgments; and particularly the threatning Use of Arms, which several other Countries have felt this Year.

By Edmund Lord Bishop of BRISTOL.

LONDON:

Printed for Thomas Bennet, at the Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-Yard. MDCCXX.

Isaiah LV. 6, 7.

Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found, call ye upon him, while he is near.

Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

IN the Time of our Health and Prosperity, we are apt to forget God, and neglect the Concerns of another Life. The Things of this World have then a Relish with them, and employ and amuse our Thoughts, so as to exclude out of our Minds, a serious Consideration of what is only the Object of Faith. But when Sickness or Affliction overtake us, or when any great Calamity threatens us; where we can't

readily ſee how to eſcape by human Means, then almoſt of Courſe we are for flying to God for Aſſiſtance; and where no other Refuge preſents it ſelf, are for imploring his Protection. And this ſome do with ſo little Preparation of Mind, and in ſo careleſs a Manner, as if they thought they need only acquaint the great God, that they are willing to accept of his Help, in order to obtain it; and again there are others, who, out of a Senſe of their former ill Behaviour towards God, can hardly work up their Minds to a Belief, that God is gracious and merciful enough to hear them, with whatever Humility and Devotion they call upon him. It may not therefore be improper on this ſolemn Occaſion, when we are deprecating one of the ſevereſt of Temporal Judgments, from which no human Wiſdom or Power can effectually defend us, to enquire with what Diſpoſitions of Mind we ought to apply to the Throne of Grace, ſo as to hope for our Prayers being heard, that ſo we may neither appear before God with a rude and vain Preſumption, nor out of a Senſe of our

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own Demerits and Unworthineſs, be overwhelm'd with Deſpair, and diſcouraged from looking out for Deliverance from the impending Evil. And this I ſhall do from the Advice given by the Prophet, in the Words of the Text: *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call ye upon him, while he is near. Let the Wicked forſake his Way, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

In ſpeaking to which Words I ſhall obſerve:

I. A Thing imply'd in the Words; That we may neglect our Opportunity, and ſtay till it is too late to call upon God.

II. The way directed to here, to avert God's Judgments, *the ſeeking God, and calling upon him.*

III. The Diſpoſition of Mind requir'd in thoſe who would ſeek God in a due Manner: The entire Amendment of their Lives, expreſs'd by *the wicked forſaking his Way, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts; and returning unto the Lord.*

And IVthly, and Laſtly, The Encouragement thus to ſeek God, That on him who thus ſeeks him, *he will have Mercy*, and *will abundantly pardon* him.

And I ſhall afterwards apply what has been ſaid to the preſent Occaſion.

And, Firſt, I ſhall obſerve a Thing imply'd in the Text, That we may neglect our Opportunity, and ſtay till it is too late to call upon God.

For certainly the Advice, to *ſeek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near*, does imply, that the Time may come, when he will not be found, but will be far from us; or in other Words, that if we neglect calling upon him at the proper Seaſon, the Time may come, when he will no more liſten to our Cry.

Now this Day of Grace, during which God is ready to hear every one who ſeeks him with his whole Heart, as to moſt particular Perſons probably laſts as long as their Lives; and the ſame Mercy of God, which continues them in this World, diſpoſes him to accept of their ſincere Re-

pentance,

pentance, and hearken to their Cry at any Time. But there seem to be some who for their outrageous Provocations against Heaven, and their obstinate Impenitency under the most powerful Means of Grace, are by God given over to a reprobate Mind, and left to the Conduct of their own Lusts, and in the Power of Satan. And with such, their Day of Grace is over before the End of their Lives, at least on this Account, that God has, whilst they are possibly still vigorous and healthy, withdrawn his Grace from them, and never will afford them those Assistances of his Holy Spirit, without which they never can so call upon God as to have any Claim to be heard by him.

As to Nations, by what we meet with in the Scriptures, an irreversible Decree may go out against them, after which God will be no more intreated for them. Thus we find God declaring by his Prophet concerning the *Jews* a little before the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, That though *Noah*, *Job* and *Daniel* were to stand before him, and intercede for that People, they should only save

their own Lives, but not prevail in Behalf of that People. Now if we consider the Declaration of God to *Abraham*, that the Iniquity of the *Amorites* was not in his Time full, but that 430 Years after he would destroy them, and give their Land to his Seed; there seems to be such a Measure of Wickedness, which when a Nation has fill'd up, God passes a final Decree of Ruin upon them.

It is certain before God thus abandons a People to their Destruction, he endeavours by one Judgment after another to awaken them to Repentance: And 'tis not till after much Patience and Long-Suffering, that he quits all Thoughts of Peace and Mercy towards them.

But still, as the Decrees of God are to us unknown; whether it be private Persons or a Nation, when they lie under or are threaten'd with any Judgment, it is their Duty to cry to God for Deliverance. And as on the one Side Insensibility under the Hand of God is one of the greatest Symptoms of Men's being abandon'd by God, and throughly ripe for the sorest of his Judgments; so on the other Side, is there

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no better Sign of there being ſtill Room for Mercy under the ſevereſt Strokes of the Divine Juſtice, than God's pouring out the Spirit of Supplication on thoſe in Affliction or Danger, and their crying with great Earneſtneſs for Deliverance. And though in ſuch a Caſe the particular Judgment we fear ſhould overtake us, yet is that only the more throughly to reform us; but our Prayers, we need not fear, will avert our total Ruin.

Which leads me to the

IId Head, the Way directed to here, to avert God's Judgments, the *ſeeking God*, and *calling upon him*. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*

By both which Expreſſions is meant our putting up our Prayers to God, to turn away or withdraw his Judgments from us.

Prayer is the great Privilege of dependent ſinful Creatures. As God is the Author of our Being, he might diſpoſe of us, as he pleaſes, without permitting us to make any Application to him on any Occaſion. As we have incurr'd his Anger by

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our Sins, he might punish us, as his Justice directed, without suffering us to put up any Address to him to alter the appointed Course. But he is graciously pleas'd to deal with us in a manner more suited to our Nature, and to our Way with our earthly Superiors; giving us leave, as we think we want to do it, to make our Supplications to him, and lay our Desires before him. And when his Judgments are overtaking us, he is so kind as to let us sue for Pardon, and intreat him to forbear punishing our Transgressions.

He might likewise, as he knows all the Hearts of the Children of Men, deal with us according as he sees a Change for the better in the Dispositions of our Minds, without allowing any Address to him. But he rather chuses to condescend to our Infirmities; and encourages us in his holy Word, not only to trust in him, but to cry mightily to him in our several Afflictions, to open to him the Sores of our Hearts, to acknowledge and bewail our crying Sins and Provocations against him, to humble our selves before him, to beg of him for the Pardon of our Sins, and to

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intreat him not to correct us according to our Deserts.

And when on such Occasions we offer up our Prayers to him, we honour God by owning his Power, Knowledge, Justice and Goodness; we strengthen our Faith and Confidence in him, by pleading to him his most glorious Attributes and most gracious Promises; we repress the Pride and Swellings of our Minds, by considering and owning our own Unworthiness; and we best fortify our selves against continuing in our Sins, by being so truly sensible of their dismal Consequences in bringing on us the Wrath of God.

And God of his infinite Goodness will not reject those who thus call upon him, if they bring with them those other Dispositions necessary to qualify them for Objects of God's Mercy. Which leads me to the

IIId Head propos'd to be spoke to, The Disposition of Mind requir'd of those who would seek God in a due Manner, the entire Amendment of their Lives, express'd by *the Wicked forsaking his Way*,

and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and *returning unto the Lord*. Which different Expreſſions may mean one and the ſame Thing; and they may likewiſe be taken for diſtinct Things, all which together make up an entire Amendment of Life. And in this Senſe by the *wicked Man forſaking his Way*, we may underſtand his breaking off his preſent evil Courſes, and reforming his outward Actions; by the *unrighteous Man forſaking his Thoughts*, we may underſtand his laying aſide all evil Deſigns for the future, and correcting the vicious Habits of his Mind; and by *turning unto the Lord*, we may underſtand his removing his Affections from this World *to God*, and living in Obedience to the Divine Commands.

One of the firſt Things done by a Man who is ſenſible of his lying under the Stroke or Approach of God's Judgments, is convincing himſelf not only that he is a Sinner in general, and deſerves Puniſhment at the Hands of God, but examining in particular what are his crying Provocations, that are pulling down the Wrath of God on his Head. And where

there is not this Conviction and Sense of Guilt, the Punishment he suffers will sooner set him on murmuring at the Providence of God, and perhaps blaspheming, than on begging of God to remove his Corrections. Agreeably to that in the Rev. 16. 9. *Men were scorch'd with great Heat, and blasphemed the Name of God, which hath Power over these Plagues, and they repented not to give him Glory.*

Another Step usually taken by Men under such Apprehensions, is resolving to correct what has thus expos'd them to the Divine Vengeance. Now that the Reformation of our Lives is necessary towards our prevailing with God, to put an End to his Judgments, is the common Sense of Mankind. Thus we find the King of *Niniveh* and his Nobles, in order to prevent the Ruin threaten'd by *Jonah* the Prophet, not only *ordering a Fast*, and enjoining every Man *to cry mightily unto God*, but commanding *every one to turn from his evil Way*, and *from the Violence that was in his Hands*; in hopes that *then God might turn and repent*,

and turn away from his fierce anger, that they should not perish.

And this is the Method every one flies to, on a Bed of Languishing, and at the Approach of Death: Not only crying to God for the restoring their Health, and prolonging their Life, but making great Vows and Resolutions of leading good Lives for the future.

And whatever Calamity we labour under, it would be an outragious Affront to God, to beg of him to withdraw his Punishments from us, without engaging and endeavouring at the same Time to quit those Sins that have provok'd him to punish us: Since without so doing, though God were inclin'd to deliver us out of our Distress on Account of our Supplications to him, yet the new Guilt we went on contracting, would call down for new Judgments upon us.

But indeed the whole Tenor of the Scriptures represents God as punishing Men in this Life, either for correcting their Manners, or vindicating his own Honour. They tell us, that *he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*; and that

that he has no Delight in the Death of a Sinner, but that he therefore sends his Judgments Abroad in the World, to make Men weigh and consider their ways, that if they are in any wicked Way, they may quit it, and turn their Feet to walk in God's Testimonies. And again, as every Sin is a Breach of God's Laws, and a Contempt of his Authority, who gave those Laws to Mankind; and as the Obstinacy of a Sinner, in persevering in Wickedness, under repeated Calls to Repentance, is a sort of Defiance of God, and a questioning either his Knowledge of human Affairs, or his Power to punish Offenders; his Honour is concern'd not to let Sin go always unpunish'd, even in this Life, but by the Calamities he sometimes sends on presumptuous Sinners, to satisfy them and the World, that Power, and Might, and Dominion belong unto God, and that there is most certainly *a God that judgeth in the Earth*.

But now both these Ends of Punishment would be defeated, if God remov'd his chastising Hand, barely upon our Prayers, without a Reformation of our Lives.

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The first End I mention'd is this very Reformation, and is design'd by setting us on examining our Ways. But neither would God's Glory be secur'd, if we could avert his Judgments, without quitting those Sins, for which they began to be pour'd out upon us. If they never overtook us, how easily might we persuade our selves, we were never in Danger of them? If they were withdrawn, where they had yet wrought no Change in us, we might soon fancy that we had been needlessly frighted, and had cry'd to God, where there was no Occasion for it. But our Amendment answers the End God rather desires should follow from his Chastisements, and leaves Room for his shewing Mercy, so as still to continue just and righteous in his Judgments.

But though the Sinner, in his Sufferings or Fear, cannot but allow all this to be true, yet when he comes to set about this Amendment, in order to obtain Pardon of God, he too often turns to By-ways, that only serve to deceive himself. He sometimes runs very much to the outward Practice of Piety and Devotion, to frequent

quent Prayers, to Faſtings, to reading much in the Scriptures, and good Books, and often receiving the bleſſed Sacrament, without troubling himſelf greatly about any Amendment. Sometimes he ſets about an external Reformation, and forbears the Commiſſion of thoſe Sins he us'd to run into, without attempting any great Change of his Mind. At other Times, he may pretty well reform what is amiſs, both within and without, excepting one or more darling Sins. And if he goes farther ſtill, he may ſet himſelf againſt every vicious Habit, without truly labouring to introduce into his Mind, every Habit of Virtue requir'd of him in the Law of God. But as all theſe ſeveral ways fall ſhort of what God expects from us, ſo neither do they fully make us ſuch Objects of his Mercy, as may depend on his reſcuing us from our Danger.

To prevent our putting any ſuch Deceits on our ſelves, the Prophet, by variety of Expreſſions, tries to ſtir us up to a thorough and univerſal Reformation of our Lives, ſuch as ſhall extend to our inward Thoughts, as well as outward Actions;

tions; such as shall make us learn to do well, at the same Time we cease to do Evil. And to secure us from a Relapse to our former vicious Courses, he would have us sincerely turn to God, removing our Affections from this World, and its ensnaring Objects, and turning them to God, and thereby making the enjoying him hereafter, the great End of our Wishes, and the Aim of all our Actions. And when we seek to God with a Mind thus regulated, God will most certainly hear us.

Which leads me to the

IVth Head propos'd to be spoke to. The Encouragement there is thus to seek God, That on him who thus seeks him, *he will have Mercy*; and *will abundantly pardon* him.

And this is the very Thing we desire and hope for, when we cry to God in any Danger, or under any Calamity; and is what we may reasonably expect, from the Accounts the Scripture every where gives us of the Goodness of God, describing him as *merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness*

and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin. That he is slow to Anger, and plenteous in Mercy; that he will not always chide, neither will he keep his Anger for ever; that *he does not deal with us after our Sins, nor reward us according to our Iniquities*: That *the Lord is good to all, and his tender Mercies over all his Works*: That *the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in Truth*; that *he will fulfil the Desire of them that fear him, and will also hear their Cry, and will save them*: That *when Fools, because of their Transgressions, and because of their Iniquities, are afflicted, so that their Soul abhorreth all Meat, and they draw near unto the Gates of Death, if they cry unto the Lord in their Trouble, he saveth them out of their Distresses, he sendeth his Word and healeth them, and delivereth them from their Destructions*: And that *they who put their Trust in him, shall not be confounded.*

And certainly, where we have so good and gracious a God to deal with, and who has engaged himself by his Promise, to hear the Petitions we offer unto him in the Name of his blessed Son, we need not

fear being rejected, where we seek to him in a due Manner.

As to private Persons then, where they address themselves to Heaven by Prayer, accompanied with true Repentance, they may depend upon being deliver'd from the Distresses they lye under; except God's Glory, or their own Good, require the contrary. It may be their Sins have given the Wicked that Offence, and Occasion of blaspheming the Name of God, that can only be removed by their Sufferings. God may possibly see, that should he take off his afflicting Hand, their good Vows and Resolutions would soon vanish, and their *Righteousness prove as the Morning Dew, and as a Cloud that passes away.* So that it is in Mercy to them, that their Calamity is continued. But still, they may depend on their Sins being pardoned, on their being supported by God's Grace to bear their Affliction, on their being in their Souls better'd by it, and on being for their chearful Submission to, and patient Behaviour under this Tryal sent on them by God, plentifully rewarded in the next World.

As to National Judgments, it ſcarce ever happens, that where there is a general Amendment of Life, God does not remove the Judgments he had brought on a Nation.

But however, tho' there ſhould not be ſuch a Reformation, as may move God to withdraw his Stroke on a ſinful People, yet is there Reaſon for thoſe humble Souls who are touch'd with the Senſe of his Juſtice, and of their own Guilt, and truly forſake their Sins, to depend on God's Mercy to themſelves, in the midſt of ſuch general Calamity. He may ſave their Lives, when he will not hear their Cries in Behalf of others. He may remarkably ſuſtain them in the midſt of a National Diſtreſs. And though for wiſe Ends, he ſees fit to ſuffer them to be involv'd in the common Ruin, yet he can make them abundant Amends for their Temporal Sufferings here, by admitting them to eternal Happineſs hereafter. And on this Account we find the Scripture repreſenting the Righteous who died, juſt as God's Judgments were coming upon the *Jews* to their final Ruin, as entring into their Chambers for a while, till the Cala-

mity was over-past, and as taken away from the Evil pour'd out upon their People. So that every one who seeks to God under any Affliction, whether publick or private, and forsakes his Evil Ways, will find his Account in so doing, either by being rescued from, or supported under the Suffering; either by Temporal Deliverance here, or the Salvation of his Soul hereafter.

Having thus gone through the Heads at first propos'd, I come to apply what has been said, to the present Occasion.

We are here met this Day, to humble our selves before Almighty God, and in a most devout and solemn Manner, to send up our Prayers and Supplications to the Divine Majesty, to implore his Protection, Blessing and Favour, to avert all those Judgments which our manifold Sins have deserv'd, and to perpetuate the Enjoyment of the Protestant Religion among us, and Safety and Prosperity to these Kingdoms.

And certainly, either the Greatness of the Blessings we are assembled to pray for, or the Terribleness of the Judgment pour'd out upon a neighbouring Nation, are sufficient to stir up in us Fervency of Devo-

tion,

tion, and to make us cry mightily to God, to avert the Stroke hanging over us.

If ever any Nation was favour'd by Heaven, with Bleſſings Temporal and Spiritual, we have certainly had our Share: Being bleſt with a fruitful and plentiful Countrey, well ſituated for Commerce, thro' the Benefit of which we have for above an Age been gathering Riches. We have had the Happineſs of being reform'd from the groſs Errors and Superſtitions of Popery, have enjoy'd the free Uſe of the Scriptures in a Language underſtood by the People, and have had the Benefit of the clear Light of the Goſpel. We have been remarkably deliver'd from the ſecret and open Attempts of our Enemies to deſtroy our Religion and Liberty, both in our own Days and the Days of our Forefathers. And when it has pleas'd God to viſit us for our Sins, he has done it gently, and has corrected us with Meaſure. Not to go far back, when in the Two late Reigns, War and Peſtilence and Famine ravag'd other Nations about us, we only felt the Expence of War without its Devaſtations in our Countrey; the deſtroying Angel

was

was kept from us, and out of our Harvests were the Necessities of other Lands supplied. As these are remarkable and continued Instances of God's Goodness to us; so if we examine either our Gratitude to him for his Blessings, or our Amendment under his Corrections, I fear, we shall find neither of them such, as can give us rational Hopes of his always persevering in the same Kindness or Gentleness towards us. It will therefore very much become us, when God's Judgments are moving about us, to awake out of our spiritual Lethargy, and to consider whether God may not have a Controversy with this People, and to examine how we are prepar'd to meet him in the Way of his Judgments.

The Hand of God has lain very heavy on a neighbouring Nation by a most dreadful Pestilence, which has in a few Months destroy'd near Three Fourths of the Inhabitants of one of the most antient and flourishing Cities of that Nation; where, when the Malignity of the Disease was at the height, less than Three Days put an End to the Life of the most healthy, without any Relief from the Skill of the Physician:

ſician: And where through the Fear of Contagion, and the Number of thoſe affected at the ſame Time, Thouſands periſh'd in the Streets, leaving it a Doubt whether they were kill'd by the Diſtemper, or loſt for want of common Neceſſaries.

And as Part of the *South* of *Europe* has ſuffer'd almoſt a general Devaſtation by this terrible Viſitation, ſo has not the *North-East* been inſenſible of the like Stroke. Yet God be prais'd we have hitherto been preſerv'd from this Contagion, tho' expoſed to it, by what at other Times is our great Advantage, our extended Commerce.

We are very apt when we hear of any ſuch ſevere and uncommon Sufferings of others, inſtead of apprehending it may be our Turn to go through the ſame Courſe next, rather to think that the Sufferers were Sinners of an extraordinary Size, and pull'd down on their Heads ſuch a Meaſure of Vengeance by ſome unheard-of Provocations. Thus we find, *Luk.* 13. 1, 2. That when *there were ſome preſent who told Jeſus of the Galileans, whoſe Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices, He anſwering, ſaid unto them; Suppoſe ye that*

theſe

most; if the best of Men having more of the Form than of the Power of Godliness, and others wholly resting in the Outside of God's Worship, without any inward Affection; and some placing their whole Trust in the Temple of the Lord being amongst us; if a general Ignorance of the Truths and Precepts of our Holy Religion, whilst the glorious Light of the Gospel is shining in our Land; if Cursing and prophane Swearing; and I wish I could not say, if a more serious and solemn taking God's Name in vain; if Ingratitude, and murmuring and repining under our Deliverances; and Insensibility and Impenitency under God's Judgments; if Uneasiness and Disobedience to our Superiors of every Kind; if Lying, Hypocrisy and Dissimulation; if Slandering and Backbitings; if Envy, Hatred, Malice, and Uncharitable Quarrels and Dissentions; if Fraud, Cheating and Over-reaching; if Covetousness and an immoderate Love of Wealth, which we have lately seen displaying it self in all Degrees and Orders of Men amongst us, beyond the Example of former Ages; if Pride, Luxury, and

these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they ſuffered ſuch Things? Obſerving to them what were the Thoughts of their Hearts on that Occaſion. And in the next Verſe we have our Bleſſed Saviour denying their unjuſt Surmiſe, and admoniſhing them by what Method alone they could eſcape as remarkable, or however as certain a Ruin, *v.* 3. *I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* Teaching us neither raſhly to overcharge others with Guilt for what they undergo in this World; nor conceitedly to aſcribe it to our own ſuperior Righteouſneſs, if we fare better than others in this Life.

Whatever may have been their Iniquities, whoſe almoſt entire Deſtruction has of late fill'd us both with Pity and Terror; I fear, if we look round this Nation with an impartial Eye, we ſhall have reaſon to think, that all Things conſider'd, we are as ripe for Judgment as they could well be.

If the open Denial of the Being and Providence of God in ſome, and a Contempt or Neglect of his Service in

We have seen that there is a gracious and merciful God to fly to in the greatest Distress. *Him*, therefore, *let us seek, while he may be found; on him let us call, while he is near*; both to avert this terrible Calamity with which we are threaten'd, and to continue to us those Spiritual and Temporal Blessings we now enjoy.

And to dispose him to hear us in this Day of our Trouble, let us confess to him, and bemoan the crying Sins of our Nation: And because the resting here, and imputing to the Provocations of others, the Occasion of what we fear, is but Hypocrisy in the Sight of God, let us likewise search and try every one our own Ways, and take to our selves Shame and Confusion of Face, for assisting to pull down Vengeance on our Country; and let us humble our selves, and beg of God to pardon our own Transgressions, as well as the Iniquities of our Land. And let our Prayers be attended with a firm Purpose *to forsake our wicked Ways, and our unrighteous Thoughts, and to turn unto the Lord our God*: And let them be follow'd by

Extravagance; if Debauchery and Intemperance; if Idleneſs and the Neglect of our ſeveral Callings; if Hearts wholly ſet on this World, and forgetful of the Concerns of another Life; if, I ſay, theſe Things can be thought either the Fore-runners or Occaſions of the Ruin of a Nation, we have nothing but the never-failing Mercies of God to fly to for reſcuing us from Deſtruction.

And if beſide theſe Sins, which are almoſt committed in the Face of the Sun, every one would enquire into the Sores of his own Heart, and conſider his ſecret Sins, how can we think to abide it, if God ſhould ariſe to judge our Land?

Let us not then be unconcerned, when we hear of the ſevere Strokes of God's Juſtice on the neighbouring Nations, as tho' our Righteouſneſs could protect us, or we had made a Covenant with Death, and the Peſtilence could not approach us. Neither let the Ineffectualneſs of human Means to deliver us from the impending Evil, or the Conſciouſneſs of our own Wickedneſs, and the Wickedneſs of our People, throw us into Deſpair, as tho' there were no Remedy to be found. We

by a suitable Practice, by our subduing every vicious Habit, by our removing our Affections from this World, and placing them on God, and that Happiness he has promis'd his faithful Servants in another Life; and by planting in our Minds every virtuous Habit, to the bringing forth in us every good Work. And if we generally do thus, it will deliver us from the Calamity we fear, and lengthen the Tranquillity of our Nation. But should others fail of doing their Duty, yet whoever thus flies to God, *on him will he have Mercy*, and him *will he abundantly pardon*. Such an one may hope to be preserv'd from the destroying Pestilence, should God visit our Land with it; but whatever his Lot may be here, may with Confidence depend on obtaining everlasting Happiness hereafter.

FINIS.